

# The Mystery of The Yellow Room

By GASTON LEROUX

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BY BRENTANO'S

## CHAPTER XIII. (Continued.)

Here Rouletabille interrupted himself and asked me if I had brought the revolver. I showed him them. Having examined both, he pronounced them excellent and handed them back to me. "Shall we have any use for them?" I asked.

"No doubt; this evening. We shall pass the night here if that won't tire you?"

"On the contrary," I said, with an expression that made Rouletabille laugh.

"No, no," he said. "This is no time for laughing. You remember the phrase which was the 'open sesame' of this chateau full of mystery?"

"Yes," I said, "perfectly. The presbytery has lost nothing of its charm nor the garden its brightness. It was the phrase which you found on the half burned piece of paper among the ashes in the laboratory?"

"Yes. At the bottom of the paper, where the flame had not reached, was this date, 23d of October. Remember this date; it is highly important. I am now going to tell you about that curious phrase. On the evening before the crime—that is to say, on the 23d—M. and Mlle. Stangerson were at a reception at the Elysee. I know that, because I was there on duty, having to interview one of the servants of the Academy of Philadelphia who was being feted there. I had never before seen either M. or Mlle. Stangerson. I was seated in the room which precedes the Salon des Ambassadeurs, and, tired of being jostled by so many noble personages, I had fallen into a vague reverie, when I scented near me the perfume of the lady in black.

"Do you ask me what is the 'perfume of the lady in black'? It must suffice you to know that it is a perfume of which I am very fond, because it was that of a lady who had been very kind to me in my childhood, a lady whom I had always seen dressed in black. The lady who that evening was scented with the perfume of the lady in black was dressed in white. She was wonderfully beautiful. I could not help rising and following her. An old man gave her his arm, and as they passed I heard voices say, 'Professor Stangerson and his daughter.' It was in that way I learned who it was I was following.

"They met M. Robert Darzac, whom I knew by sight. Professor Stangerson, escorted by Mr. Arthur William Rance, one of the American savants, seated himself in the great gallery, and M. Robert Darzac led Mlle. Stangerson into the conservatory. I followed. The weather was very mild that evening. The garden doors were open. Mlle. Stangerson threw a fichu shawl over her shoulders, and I plainly saw that it was she who was begging M. Darzac to go with her into the garden. I continued to follow, interested by the agitation plainly exhibited by the bearing of M. Darzac. They slowly passed along the wall abutting on the Avenue Marigny. I took the central alley, walking parallel with them, and then crossed over for the purpose of getting nearer to them. The night was dark, and the grass denuded the sound of my steps. They had stopped under the vacillating light of a gas jet and appeared to be both bending over a paper held by Mlle. Stangerson, reading something which deeply interested them. I stopped in the darkness and silence.

"Neither of them saw me, and I distinctly heard Mlle. Stangerson repeat as she was refolding the paper, 'The presbytery has lost nothing of its charm nor the garden its brightness.' It was said in a tone at once mocking and despairing and was followed by a burst of such nervous laughter that I think her words will never cease to sound in my ears. But another phrase was uttered by M. Robert Darzac, 'Must I commit a crime, then, to win you?' He was in an extraordinarily agitated state. He took the hand of Mlle. Stangerson and held it for a long time to his lips, and I thought from the movement of his shoulders that he was crying. Then they went away.

"When I returned to the great gallery," continued Rouletabille, "I saw no more of M. Robert Darzac, and I was not to see him again until after the tragedy at the Glandier. Made-moiselle was near Mr. Rance, who was talking with much animation, his eyes during the conversation glowing with a singular brightness. Mlle. Stangerson, I thought, was not even listening to what he was saying, her face expressing perfect indifference. His face was the red face of a drunkard. When M. and Mlle. Stangerson left he went to the bar and remained there. I joined him and rendered him some little service in the midst of the pressing crowd. He thanked me and told me he was returning to America three days later—that is to say, on the 26th, the day after the crime. I talked with him about Philadelphia. He told me he had lived there for five and twenty years and that it was there he had met the illustrious Professor Stangerson and his daughter. He drank a great deal of champagne, and when I left him he was very nearly drunk. "Such were my experiences on that evening, and I leave you to imagine

what effect the news of the attempted murder of Mlle. Stangerson produced on me—with what force those words pronounced by M. Robert Darzac, 'Must I commit a crime, then, to win you?' recurred to me. It was not this phrase, however, that I repeated to him when we met here at the Glandier. The sentence of the presbytery and the bright garden sufficed to open the gate of the chateau. If you ask me if I believe now that M. Darzac is the murderer I must say I do not. I do not think I ever quite thought that. At the time I could not really think seriously of anything. I had no little evidence to go on, but I needed to have at once the proof that he had not been wounded in the hand.

"When we were alone together I told him how I had chanced to overhear a part of his conversation with Mlle. Stangerson in the garden of the Elysee, and when I repeated to him the words, 'Must I commit a crime, then, to win you?' he was greatly troubled, though much less so than he had been by hearing me repeat the phrase about the presbytery. What threw him into a state of real consternation was to learn from me that the day on which he had gone to meet Mlle. Stangerson at the Elysee was the very day on which she had gone to the postoffice for the letter. It was that letter perhaps which ended with the words, 'The presbytery has lost nothing of its charm nor the garden its brightness.' My surmise was confirmed by my finding, if you remember, in the ashes of the laboratory the fragment of paper dated Oct. 23. The letter had been written and withdrawn from the postoffice on the same day.

"There can be no doubt that on returning from the Elysee that night Mlle. Stangerson had tried to destroy that compromising paper. It was in vain that M. Darzac denied that that letter had anything whatever to do with the crime. I told him that in an affair so filled with mystery as this he had no right to hide this letter; that I was persuaded it was of considerable importance that the desperate tone in which Mlle. Stangerson had pronounced the phrase; that his own tears and the threat of a crime which he had professed after the letter was read—all these facts tended to leave no room for me to doubt. M. Darzac became more and more agitated, and I determined to take advantage of the effect I had produced on him. 'You were on the point of being married, monsieur,' I said negligently and without looking at him, 'and suddenly your marriage becomes impossible because of the writer of that letter—because as soon as his letter was read you spoke of the necessity for a crime to win Mlle. Stangerson. Therefore there is some one between you and her—some one who is preventing your marriage with her; some one who has attempted to kill her so that she should not be able to marry.' And I concluded with these words: 'Now, monsieur, you have only to tell me in confidence the name of the murderer.' The words I had uttered must have struck him ominously, for when I turned my eyes on him I saw that his face was haggard, the perspiration standing on his forehead and terror showing in his eyes.

"Monsieur," he said to me, 'I am going to ask of you something which may appear insane, but in exchange for which I place my life in your hands. You must not tell the magistrates of what you saw and heard in the garden of the Elysee; neither to them nor to anybody. I swear to you that I am innocent, and I know, I feel, that you believe me, but I would rather be taken for the guilty man than see justice go astray on that phrase. "The presbytery has lost nothing of its charm nor the garden its brightness." The judges must know nothing about that phrase. All this matter is in your hands. Monsieur, I leave it there, but forget the evening at the Elysee. A hundred other roads are open to you in your search for the criminal. I will open them for you myself. I will help you. Will you take up your quarters here? You may remain here to do as you please. Eat, sleep here, watch my actions, the actions of all here. You shall be master of the Glandier, monsieur, but forget the evening at the Elysee."

Rouletabille here paused to take breath. I now understood what had appeared so unexplainable in the demeanor of M. Robert Darzac toward my friend and the facility with which the young reporter had been able to install himself on the scene of the crime.

"Everything seems to be pointing against him," continued my friend, "and the situation is becoming exceedingly grave. M. Darzac appears not to mind it much, but in that he is wrong. I was interested only in the health of Mlle. Stangerson, which was daily improving, when something occurred that is even more mysterious than—the mystery of the yellow room."

"Impossible!" I cried. "What could be more mysterious than that?"

"Let us first go back to M. Robert Darzac," said Rouletabille, clapping me. "I have said that everything seems to be pointing against him. The

marks of the neat boots found by Frederic Larsan appear to be really the footprints of Mlle. Stangerson's dance. The marks made by the bicycle may have been made by his bicycle. He had usually left it at the chateau. Why did he take it to Paris on that particular occasion? Was it because he was not going to return again to the chateau? Was it because, owing to the breaking off of his marriage, his relations with the Stangersons were to cease? All who are interested in the matter affirm that those relations were to continue unchanged.

"Frederic Larsan, however, believes that all intercourse was at an end. From the day when M. Darzac accompanied Mlle. Stangerson to the department store until the day after the crime he had not been at the Glandier. Remember that Mlle. Stangerson lost her reticule containing the key with the brass head while she was in his company. From that day to the evening at the Elysee the Sorbonne professor and Mlle. Stangerson did not see one another, but they may have written to each other. Mlle. Stangerson went to the postoffice to get a letter which Larsan says was written by Robert Darzac, for, knowing nothing of what had passed at the Elysee, Larsan believes that it was M. Darzac himself who stole the reticule and the key with the design of forcing her consent by getting possession of the precious papers of her father—papers which he would have restored to him on condition that the marriage engagement was to be fulfilled.

"All that would have been a very doubtful and almost absurd hypothesis, as Larsan admitted to me, but for another and much graver circumstance. In the first place, here is something which I have not been able to explain—M. Darzac had himself on the 24th gone to the postoffice to ask for the letter which made-moiselle had called for and received on the previous evening. The description of the man who made application tallies in every respect with the appearance of M. Darzac, who in answer to the questions put to him by the examining magistrate denies that he went to the postoffice. Now, even admitting that the letter was written by him, which I do not believe, he knew that Mlle. Stangerson had received it since he had seen it in her hands in the garden at the Elysee. It could not have been he, then, who had gone to the postoffice the day after the 24th to ask for a letter which he knew was no longer there.

"To me it appears clear that somebody strongly resembling him stole Mlle. Stangerson's reticule and in that letter had demanded of her something which she had not sent him. He must have been surprised at the failure of his demand; hence his application at the postoffice, to learn whether his letter had been delivered to the person to whom it had been addressed. Finding that it had been claimed, he had become furious. What had he demanded? Nobody but Mlle. Stangerson knows. Then on the day following it is reported that she has been attacked during the night, and the next day I discovered that the professor had at the same time been robbed by means of the key referred to in the poste restante letter. It would seem, then, that the man who went to the postoffice to inquire for the letter must have been the murderer. All these arguments Larsan applies as against M. Darzac. You may be sure that the examining magistrate, Larsan and myself have done our best to get from the postoffice precise details relative to the singular personage who applied there on the 24th of October. But nothing has been learned. We don't know where he came from or where he went. Beyond the description which makes him resemble M. Darzac we know nothing.

"I have announced in the leading journals that a handsome reward will be given to a driver of any public conveyance who drove a fare to 40, Post-office, about 10 o'clock on the morning of the 24th of October. Information to be addressed to 'M. R.' at the office of the Epoque, but no answer has resulted. The man may have walked, but as he was most likely in a hurry there was a chance that he might have gone in a cab. Who, I keep asking myself night and day, is the man who so strongly resembles M. Robert Darzac and who is also known to have bought the cane which has fallen into Larsan's hands?

"The most serious fact is that M. Darzac was at the very same time that his double presented himself at the postoffice down for a lecture at the Sorbonne. He had not delivered that lecture, and one of his friends took his place. When I questioned him as to how he had employed the time he told me that he had gone for a stroll in the Bois de Boulogne. What do you think of a professor who instead of giving his lecture obtains a substitute to go for a stroll in the Bois de Boulogne? When Frederic Larsan asked him for information on this point he quietly replied that it was no business of his how he spent his time in Paris, on which Fred swore aloud that he would find out without anybody's help.

"All this seems to fit in with Fred's hypothesis—namely, that M. Stanger-

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BURLEIGH & BOYD  
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Office upstairs in Bank Build-  
ing. Ind. Home phone in office  
and residence.

SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT  
BILL IS BOWLED OVER  
The bill Representative Rusk got  
through the legislature, fixing the  
salary of the school superintendent  
of Wallowa county at \$1200, was  
voted by Governor Chamberlain after  
the legislature adjourned. The  
bill contained a provision that at-  
tempted to refer the matter of in-  
crease to the people of the county.  
Regarding this the governor states:  
"It purports to submit the act to  
the voters of Wallowa county, but  
the referendum therein contained  
is imperfect and the bill will become  
operative at the expiration of 90 days  
after the adjournment of the session  
unless vetoed."

Rural Route Granted.  
The rural free delivery route at  
Wallowa has been granted and will  
be put in service May 1, at which  
time the Flora s.a.g. will change to  
the M. P. Miller road.

DR. C. A. AULT  
PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON  
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Home phone both office and  
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hypothesis—namely, that M. Stanger-  
son allowed the murderer to escape in  
order to avoid a scandal. The hypothe-  
sis is further substantiated by the fact  
that Darzac was in the yellow room  
and was permitted to get away. That  
hypothesis I believe to be a false one.  
Larsan is being misled by it, though  
that would not displease me did it not  
affect an innocent person. Now, does  
that hypothesis really mislead Frederic  
Larsan? That is the question—that is  
the question."

"Perhaps he is right," I cried, inter-  
rupting Rouletabille. "Are you sure  
that M. Darzac is innocent? It seems  
to me that these are extraordinary coin-  
cidences!"

"Coincidences," replied my friend.  
"are the worst enemies to truth."  
"What does the examining magis-  
trate think now of the matter?"

"M. de Marquet hesitates to accuse  
M. Darzac in the absence of absolute  
proofs. Not only would he have public  
opinion wholly against him, to say  
nothing of the Sorbonne, but M. and  
Mlle. Stangerson. She adores M. Robert  
Darzac. Indistinctly as she saw  
the murderer, it would be hard to  
make the public believe that she could  
not have recognized him if Darzac had  
been the criminal. No doubt the yel-  
low room was very dimly lit, but a  
night light, however small, gives some  
light. Here, my boy, is how things  
stood when three days, or, rather, three  
nights, ago an extraordinarily strange  
incident occurred."

## CHAPTER XIV.

"I Expect the Assassin This Evening."

"I MUST take you," said Roule-  
tabille, "so as to enable you  
to understand, to the various  
scenes. I myself believe that  
I have discovered what everybody else  
is searching for—namely, how the mur-  
derer escaped from the yellow room  
without any accomplice and without  
Mlle. Stangerson having had anything  
to do with it. But so long as I am not  
sure of the real murderer I cannot  
state the theory on which I am work-  
ing. I can only say that I believe it  
to be correct and in any case a quite  
natural and simple one. As to what  
happened in this place three nights ago,  
I must say it kept me wondering for a  
whole day and night. It passes all be-  
lief. The theory I have formed from  
the incident is so absurd that I would  
rather matters remained as yet unex-  
plained."

Saying which, the young reporter in-  
vited me to go and make the tour of  
the chateau with him. The only sound  
to be heard was the crunching of the  
dead leaves beneath our feet. The sil-  
ence was so intense that one might  
have thought the chateau had been  
abandoned. The old stones, the stag-  
nant water of the ditch surrounding  
the donjon, the bleak ground strewn  
with the dead leaves, the dark, skele-  
ton-like outlines of the trees—all con-  
tributed to give to the desolate place,  
now filled with its awful mystery, an  
aspect the most funereal. As we passed  
round the donjon we met the Green  
Man, the forest keeper, who did not  
greet us, but walked by as if we had  
not existed. He was looking just as I  
had formerly seen him through the  
window of the Donjon Inn. He had  
still his fowling piece slung at his  
back, his pipe was in his mouth and  
his eyeglasses on his nose.

"An old kind of fish," Rouletabille  
said to me in a low tone.

"Have you spoken to him?" I asked.

"Yes, but I could get nothing out  
of him. His only answers are grunts  
and shrugs of the shoulders. He gen-  
erally lives on the first floor of the  
donjon—a big room that once served  
for an oratory. He lives like a bear,  
never goes out without his gun and is  
only pleasant with the girls. The  
women for twelve miles round are all  
settling their caps for him. For the  
present he is paying attention to Mme.  
Mathien, whose husband is keeping a  
lynx eye upon her in consequence."

After passing the donjon, which is  
situated at the extreme end of the  
left wing, we went to the back of the  
chateau, Rouletabille, pointing to a  
window which I recognized as the

son's apartment, said to me:  
"If you had been here two nights  
servant at the top of a ladder about  
ago you would have seen your humble  
only one belonging to Mlle. Stanger-  
son to enter the chateau by that window."

As I expressed some surprise at this  
piece of nocturnal gymnastics, he be-  
gan to notice carefully the exterior  
disposition of the chateau. We then  
went back into the building.

"I must now show you the first floor  
of the chateau, where I am living,"  
said my friend. He motioned me to  
follow him up a magnificent flight of  
stairs ending in a landing on the first  
floor. From this landing one could  
pass to the right or left wing of the  
chateau by a gallery opening from it.  
This gallery, high and wide, extended  
along the whole length of the building  
and was lit from the front of the cha-  
teau facing the north. The rooms, the  
windows of which looked to the south,  
opened out of the gallery. Professor  
Stangerson inhabited the left wing of  
the building. Mlle. Stangerson had her  
apartment in the right wing.

We entered the gallery to the right.  
A narrow carpet laid on the waxed  
oaken floor, which shone like glass,  
denuded the sound of our footsteps.  
Rouletabille asked me in a low tone to  
walk carefully as we were passing the  
door of Mlle. Stangerson's apartment.  
This consisted of a bedroom, an ante-  
room, a small bathroom, a boudoir and  
a drawing room. One could pass from  
one to another of these rooms without  
having to go by way of the gallery.  
The gallery continued straight to the  
western end of the building, where it  
was lit by a high window. At about  
two-thirds of its length this gallery at  
a right angle joined another gallery  
following the course of the right wing.

The better to follow this narrative  
we shall call the gallery leading from  
the stairs to the eastern window the  
"right" gallery and the gallery quit-  
ting it at a right angle the "off turn-  
ing" gallery. It was at the meeting  
point of the two galleries that Roule-  
tabille had his chamber, adjoining that  
of Frederic Larsan, the door of each  
opening on to the "off turning" gal-  
lery, while the doors of Mlle. Stan-  
gerson's apartment opened into the  
"right" gallery.

Rouletabille opened the door of his  
room and after we had passed in care-  
fully drew the bolt. I had not had  
time to glance around the place in  
which he had been installed when he  
uttered a cry of surprise and pointed  
to a pair of eyeglasses on a side table.

"What are these doing here?" he  
asked.

I should have been puzzled to an-  
swer him.

"I wonder," he said—"I wonder if  
this is what I have been searching for.  
I wonder if these are the eyeglasses  
from the presbytery."

He seized them eagerly, his fingers  
caressing the glasses. Then looking at  
me, with an expression of terror on  
his face, he murmured, "Oh, oh!"

He repeated the exclamation again  
and again, as if his thoughts had sud-  
denly turned his brain.

He rose and, putting his hand on my  
shoulder, laughed like one demented as  
he said:

"Those glasses will drive me silly.  
Mathematically speaking, the thing is  
possible, but humanly speaking it is  
impossible, or afterward, or after-  
ward!"

Two light knocks struck the door.  
Rouletabille opened it. A figure en-  
tered. I recognized the concierge  
whom I had seen when she was being  
taken to the pavilion for examination.  
I was surprised, thinking she was still  
under lock and key. This woman said  
in a very low tone:

"In the grove of the parker."

Rouletabille replied, "Thanks." The  
woman then left. He again turned to  
me, his look haggard, after having  
carefully refastened the door, mutter-  
ing some incomprehensible phrases.

"If the thing is mathematically pos-  
sible why should it not be humanly?  
And if it is humanly possible the mat-  
ter is simply awful."

I interrupted him in his soliloquy.

"Have they set the concierges at li-  
berty, then?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied, "I had them lib-  
erated. I needed people I could trust.  
The woman is thoroughly devoted to  
me, and her husband would lay down

his life for me."

"Oh!" I said. "When will he have  
occasion to do it?"

"This evening, for this evening I ex-  
pect the murderer."

"You expect the murderer this even-  
ing? Then you know him?"

"I shall know him, but I should be  
mad to affirm categorically at this mo-  
ment that I do know him. The mathe-  
matical idea I have of the murderer  
gives results so frightful, so mon-  
strous, that I hope it is still possible  
that I am mistaken. I hope so with all  
my heart."

"Five minutes ago you did not know  
the murderer. How can you say that  
you expect him this evening?"

"Because I know that he must  
come."

Rouletabille very slowly filled his  
pipe and lit it. That meant an inter-  
esting story. At that moment we heard  
some one walking in the gallery and  
passing before our door. Rouletabille  
listened. The sound of the footstep  
died away in the distance.

"Is Frederic Larsan in his room?" I  
asked, pointing to the partition.

"No," my friend answered. "He went  
to Paris this morning, still on the want  
of Darzac who also left for Paris.  
That matter will turn out badly. I ex-  
pect that M. Darzac will be arrested in  
the course of the next week. The worst  
of it is that everything seems to be  
in league against him—clerks, magis-  
trates, people. Not an hour goes by  
without bringing some new evidence."  
(Continued next week)

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION  
Department of the Interior  
U. S. Land Office at La Grande, O-  
regon, January 11, 1909.  
Notice is hereby given that a  
L. Childers, of Enterprise, Oregon,  
on October 16, 1902, made  
Homestead Entry, No. 12040, for  
1/2 NE 1/4, N 1/4 SE 1/4, Section 1,  
Township 1 North, Range 44  
Willamette Meridian, has filed  
evidence of intention to make Final  
Year Proof to establish claim to  
the land above described, bearing  
W. Sheahan, U. S. Commissioner, at  
his office at Enterprise, Oregon,  
on the 20th day of February, 1909.  
Claimant names as witnesses:  
Frank W. Heskett, of Walla-  
Walla, Oregon; David H. Hearing, of  
Oregon; Nicolas W. Ownbe,  
Enterprise, Oregon; James W. Ca-  
rroll, of Enterprise, Oregon.  
F. C. Bramwell, Register.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION (Is-  
sued Tract.)  
PUBLIC LAND SALE  
Department of the Interior  
U. S. Land Office at La Grande, O-  
regon, January 16, 1909.  
Notice is hereby given that, as di-  
rected by the Commissioner of the  
General Land Office, under provi-  
sions of Act of Congress approved  
June 27, 1906, (34 Stats., 517), we  
will offer at public sale, to the high-  
est bidder, at ten o'clock a. m., on  
the 9th day of March, 1909, at this  
office, the following described land:  
SE 1/4 NE 1/4 Section 24, Township 1  
South, Range 44, East Willamette  
Meridian, Serial No. 0887.  
Any persons claiming adverse to the  
above-described land are advised to  
file their claims, or objections, on  
or before the time designated for  
sale. F. C. Bramwell, Register.  
2345

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY.  
An exceptional opportunity is offered  
for a man with small capital in the  
hardware business at Lostine. Es-  
tablished business and splendid  
terms to the right man. It will pay  
you to investigate. See or write H.  
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Pine Burr Flour.  
The Flora mill ground its first lot  
of wheat February 17, and everything  
went off smoothly from the start.  
The flour is called the "Pine Burr."